

Message Text

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 /058 W
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R 271432Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4800
INFO AMCONSUL BORDEAUX
AMCONSUL LYON
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE
AMCONSUL NICE
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 18804

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, FR
SUBJECT: AFTERMATH OF SOCIALIST PARTY CONGRESS

REF: PARIS 18154

SUMMARY. IN THE WEEK FOLLOWING THE PS CONGRESS AT NANTES, THE PARTY HAS CONTINUED TO MOVE IN THE PREDICTABLE PATHS OF CONTINUITY AND CONSOLIDATION. THE UPPER LEADERSHIP HAS BEEN REAFFIRMED IN ITS TOTALITY, WITH A TOUCH OF CONCERN FOR THE FEMININE MOVEMENT EVIDENT IN SOME NEW APPOINTMENTS. THE CERES REMAINS WITHIN THE PARTY, ALTHOUGH ITS ULTIMATE DISPOSITION WILL PROBABLY NOT BE SEEN FOR AT LEAST SOME WEEKS (MOST LIKELY IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE SELECTION OF LEGISLATIVE CANDIDATES). MORE WORRISOME FOR THE PS MUST BE THE NEGATIVE REACTION OF ALMOST ALL FRINGE PARTIES (FAR LEFT, PSU, ECOLOGISTS, ETC.) TO THE RESULTS AT NANTES AND THE GROWING MOMENTUM FOR SUCH ORGANIZATIONS TO FIELD LEGISLATIVE SLATES ON A LARGE SCALE. MITTERRAND ALSO STIRRED
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UP A NEW ROUND OF POLEMICS WITH HIS PCF PARTNERS BASED ON HIS REMARKS CONCERNING THE RAPID CONCLUSION OF THE COMMON PROGRAM. END SUMMARY.

1. CONTINUITY REIGNS AT PLACE PALAIS BOURBON: THE EMPHASIS ON DISCIPLINE AND LOYALTY, SO AMPLY DEMONSTRATED IN NANTES JUNE 17-19, CONTINUED IN PARIS ON JUNE 22

AS THE PS SELECTED ITS NEW NATIONAL LEADERSHIP. THE "NEW" TEAM AT PLACE PALAIS BOURBON IS MOST NOTABLE FOR ITS CONTINUITY -- ALL 14 NATIONAL SECRETARIES RETAINED THEIR POSITIONS. THE PARTY MARKED SOME CHANGE BY CREATING A NEW NATIONAL SECRETARY FOR WOMEN'S ACTION, A POST GIVEN TO LONG-TIME MITTERRAND SUPPORTER YVETTE ROUDY, AND SHOWED INCREASED CONCERN IN GENERAL FOR THE FEMININE MOVEMENT BY NAMING WOMEN TO TWO OF THE FIVE "SUPPLEMENTARY" NATIONAL SECRETARYSHIPS. CERES LEADER JEAN-PIERRE CHEVENEMENT, AFTER SOME INITIAL INDECISION, DECIDED TO REMAIN IN THE EXECUTIVE BUREAU WHERE HIS FACTION NOW HOLDS SIX OF 27 SEATS (A LOSS OF ONE). THE OVERALL IMPRESSION OF THIS LATEST MANEUVERING IS CERTAINLY ONE OF STABILITY, RECOGNIZING LOYAL SUPPORT FOR THE FIRST SECRETARY MORE THAN POLITICAL IMAGINATION OR CREATIVITY. HOWEVER, MITTERRAND HAS ATTEMPTED TO BALANCE SOMEWHAT THE TRADITIONAL CERES APPEAL TO YOUNGER PS ADHERENTS BY BRINGING MANY OF THE NEW BREED OF YOUNG SOCIALIST MAYORS ONTO THE DIRECTING COMMITTEE, THUS TRYING TO COUNTER THE CERES' IMAGE OF YOUTH AND DYNAMISM.

2. THE CERES LIVES (OR LINGERS ON): FOR THE MOMENT, THE LEFT-WING CERES FACTION, SUMMARILY EXCLUDED FROM THE PARTY MAINSTREAM AT NANTES, IS ADRIFT. THE RANK AND FILE HAVE BEGUN TESTING THE POLITICAL WATERS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL IN CONFORMANCE WITH CHEVENEMENT'S COUNSEL "TO DO CONFIDENTIAL

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WHAT SEEMS BEST" WITHIN EACH SECTION AND FEDERATION. THE NATIONAL LEADERS, THROUGH RESTRAINED BUT CONTINUED PROCLAMATION OF THEIR RIGOROUS IDEOLOGICAL COMMITMENT, PROVIDE A STABLE FOCAL POINT. CERES' PESSIMISM IS TEMPERED BY AT LEAST TWO FACTORS:

-- A SENSE THAT A SIGNIFICANT MAJORITY OF THE PARTY IS SYMPATHETIC TO ITS DEFENSE OF DEMOCRACY WITHIN THE PS, THOUGH NOT TO ITS TACTIC OF CONSTANTLY AND PUBLICLY CHALLENGING THE PS OFFICIAL LINE;

-- AND A COROLLARY BELIEF THAT ITS CURRENT PROBLEMS ARE DUE MOSTLY TO THE MANIPULATIONS OF A FEW PARTY LEADERS MORE INTERESTED IN PERSONAL POWER THAN PARTY UNITY AND WHO, IN THE WORDS OF DIDIER MOTCHANE, WANT TO "CONSERVE THE MONOPOLY OF POWER WHICH CONSTITUTES IN THEIR EYES THE ACCESS RAMP TO THE GRAND PARKING LOT OF POLITICAL LIFE."

THERE IS LITTLE QUESTION THAT THE CERES REMAINS COMMITTED TO THE PS, ALBEIT DISILLUSIONED WITH THE CURRENT LEADERSHIP, AND VIEWS ITSELF STILL AS THE PARTY'S BEST, AND MAYBE LAST, DEFENDER OF THE TRUE FAITH (READ WORKERS' SELF-MANAGEMENT ABOVE ALL ELSE). THE FIRST REAL TEST OF CERES' REACTION TO NANTES AND OF ITS REMAINING

STRENGTH, WILL COME DURING THE SUMMER AND EARLY FALL,

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 18804

IN CONJUNCTION WITH PARTY MANEUVERING TO SELECT CANDIDA-
TES THROUGHOUT FRANCE FOR THE LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS.

3. BEHOLD THE FRINGE: THERE IS AMPLE REASON FOR THE
PS TO BE CONCERNED NOT ONLY WITH THE CERES ROLE IN THE
LEGISLATIVES, BUT WITH THE PROSPECTS FOR AN UNPRECEDEN-
TED NUMBER OF COMPETING FRINGE-PARTY CANDIDATES:

-- THE FAR LEFT, FOR EXAMPLE, WHICH AVERAGED 5.3
PERCENT OF THE VOTE IN CITIES WHERE IT RAN IN MARCH,
IS MORE CONCERNED THAN EVER, AFTER NANTES, WITH THE
"IDEOLOGICAL BACKSLIDING" OF THE PS AND SEEMS ALMOST
CERTAIN TO MAKE A MAJOR EFFORT TO FIELD A LARGE NUMBER
OF ITS OWN CANDIDATES FOR THE LEGISLATIVES;

-- THE PSU HAS ALREADY PROPOSED AN "ECOLOGICAL,
FEMININE, WORKERS' SELF-MANAGEMENT" ALLIANCE FOR THE
LEGISLATIVES;

-- ECOLOGICAL GROUPS, WHO GARNERED SOME 200,000
VOTES IN URBAN FRANCE IN THE MUNICIPALS (OVER 10 PER-
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CENT IN TEN CITIES, INCLUDING SOME DISTRICTS IN PARIS), SHOW NO SIGNS OF LETTING THEMSELVES BE CO-OPTED BY EITHER THE PS OR PCF, BOTH OF WHOM HAVE FURTHER ANGERED ECOLOGISTS BY THEIR RECENT STANDS IN FAVOR OF NUCLEAR ENERGY PROGRAMS.

ALTHOUGH THE DYNAMICS OF SUCH MARGINAL GROUP VOTING REMAINS SOMEWHAT UNCERTAIN, CURRENT STUDIES INDICATE THAT THERE IS AMPLE REASON FOR PS CONCERN, PARTICULARLY SHOULD CERES DISENCHANTMENT BE MANIFESTED IN SOME FORM OF ELECTORAL COLLUSION. THE SITUATION IS NOT LIKELY TO IMPROVE, BECAUSE THE MORE MITTERRAND TALKS OF REASON AND DISCIPLINE AS OPPOSED TO "RUPTURE WITH CAPITALISM" AND WORKERS' SELF-MANAGEMENT, THE MORE SUCH PLURALITY OF CANDIDATES WILL BE ENCOURAGED.

4. ECHOES OF NANTES: MITTERRAND'S TWO-HOUR SPEECH OF JUNE 19 RECEIVED PROMINENT COVERAGE IN THE FOLLOWING DAY'S PRESS, BUT HAS SINCE FADED INTO OBSCURITY, WITH THE EXCEPTION ON HIS REMARKS ON THE COMMON PROGRAM. THE PCF REACTED VIOLENTLY TO HIS SUGGESTIONS THAT THERE WAS NO REASON TO STRETCH THE UPDATING PROCESS BEYOND JULY AND THAT THE PS WOULD GO IT ALONE WITH ITS OWN PROGRAM IF A COMPROMISE (READ PCF CONCESSIONS) COULD NOT BE REACHED. THE PCF IMMEDIATELY CANCELLED THE JUNE 21 NEGOTIATING SESSION, AND MARCHAIS CALLED A CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING FOR JUNE 23. THE PROSPECTS FOR ACTUALLY FINISHING THE UPDATING BY JULY SEEM REMOTE AT PRESENT; A GOOD DEAL MORE POLEMICIZING IS LIKELY TO BE HEARD FROM BOTH SIDES, BUT IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE THAT EITHER MITTERRAND OR MARCHAIS IS WILLING TO COMMIT IDEOLOGICAL SUICIDE OVER THE ISSUE.

5. A RAY OF SUNSHINE: IN REVIEWING THE CONGLOMERATION
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OF POLITICAL VERBAGE SPILLED FORTH AT NANTES, THE SPEECH OF NATIONAL SECRETARY FOR THE PUBLIC SECTOR MICHEL ROCARD STANDS OUT AS A RARE EXAMPLE OF STUDIED THOUGHT AND REALISM. OPENING WITH "FINALLY THE PROBLEMS BEGIN," ROCARD NOTED THAT ONE ENCOUNTERS ALREADY IN THE PS A "LACK OF PREPARATION, SELF-SATISFACTION, LACK OF ATTENTION TO TECHNICAL GIVENS, REFUSAL TO RECOGNIZE THE HEAVIEST CONSTRAINTS..." CONTINUING THROUGHOUT IN THE SAME VEIN, ROCARD ANALYZED THE GREAT PROBLEMS AND UNCERTAINTIES INHERENT IN THE NATIONALIZATION PROCESS AND ONCE AGAIN INSISTED ON THE NECESSITY FOR

MAINTAINING THE MARKET MECHANISM ("ALL SOCIALIST EXPERIENCES WHICH HAVE ELIMINATED RISK AND ECONOMIC SANCTIONS HAVE BEEN LED TO CONSTRUCT MODELS OF BUREAUCRATIC DEVELOPMENT"). IT WAS UNFORTUNATE, BOTH FOR THE PARTY AND FOR THE AUDITORS, THAT THE DEBATE SELDOM ROSE TO SUCH HEIGHTS. BUT NOW THAT NANTES' MAIN FOCUS OF INTEREST (CERES' ROLE IN THE PARTY) HAS BEEN SETTLED, WE MIGHT EXPECT PS LEADERS AND EXPERTS TO SPEAK OUT MORE OFTEN ON ROCARD'S "PROBLEMS", BOTH IN THE CONTEXT OF THE UPDATING OF THE COMMON PROGRAM AND IN THE GENERAL PUBLIC DEBATE.

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